



# GSS

The Graduate Student Senate of  
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

## **Tech Fee Forum Minutes**

**26 August 2008**

On Tuesday, August 26th, the University presented a forum in response to GSS resolution 2008.01. In attendance from the University:

- Lynn Singer (Deputy Provost and Vice President for Academic Programs)
- Don Feke (Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education)
- Lev Gonick (Vice President for Information Technology Services and Chief Information Officer)
- Don Chenelle (Director of University Financial Aid)
- Chris Ash (Vice President for Planning and Budget)
- Dean Rozek (School of Graduate Studies)

As an introduction, Dean Rozek and Lynn Singer explained how the forum arose, and that much of the initial problems stemmed from poor communication during the high administrative turnover. The fee was to match the tech fee assessed to the undergrads for the funding of the technology infrastructure of the North Residential village. Dr. Singer apologized for the situation and stated that she echoes the hopes of the graduate students that this is a start of a new era of communication. Currently, every school handles the fee differently and even advisers within schools handle the fee differently, this variability as well as poor communication has caused much confusion. After the GSS General Assembly Meeting with the President, the administration started working with the President on the fee.

Currently, it is expected that starting in 2009-2010, that the Tech Fee will be rolled into tuition uniformly across all schools. The decision needs to be finalized by the Board of Trustees at their December meetings.

Lev Gonick explained items about the SIS system including that the tech fee is going solely for the Student Information System (SIS) over a 11 year basis. Finances need to support staff, hardware, software creation and maintenance and the tech fee pays for these costs along with other fiscal streams. The heart of the "old system" is actually something called ISIS (Integrated Student Information System) which is vintage 1989 (or thereabouts) and has been unsupported (by the vendor), underpowered, and outmoded for a very long time. The University utilized a large number of other systems that tenuously interfaced with ISIS to accomplish the many

processes needed to run the academic (e.g., registration, degree audit, etc.) and business processes (e.g., billing, housing) for students. SOLAR was only the piece that students used (when it worked) for on-line registration for courses. One of the main reasons for going to a single integrated student information system is that the whole mosaic of information systems serving student needs was in danger of collapsing. Additional issues with the "old system" were legal because of the usage of the Social Security Number.

It was stated that there is no commingling between funding for North Residential Tech infrastructure and the SIS system, but **the issue remains that undergrads on campus pay an equal tech fee to other students and implies that undergrads on campus pay less for the SIS system than everyone else.** The SIS system is expected to undergo its first update in 2011 and will not augment the tech fee. Additionally, it was asked and confirmed that Tech Fee is confusing because it really is a SIS fee and only covers the SIS. To answer how students were involved in the process of the development of the SIS system, numerous forums were held although it was **unclear whether any forums were directed at graduate students since the student forums were held in the dorms.** Additionally, Lev Gonick indicated that grad students sit on the ITSPAC Student Impact Subcommittee a committee that Dean Rozek and Douglas are unaware of which student served on as well as the current and 07-08 GSS Presidents didn't know existed.

Don Feke discussed a little history of the fee that was voted in 2005 by the Deans and the Provost and was motivated by the desire to ensure that future administration cannot shortchange IT by shifting tuition dollars away from IT. A fee would prevent this concern.

In response to whether a new fee would be showing up in the future, it was stated that the schools finances were not in the best shape at the time of the creation of the fee, and mechanisms were not in place for the individual schools to handle a special cost. At this point, no new fees are expected since the schools are better equipped now. **What was left unaddressed is what new mechanisms have been put in place to supervise the creation or modification of fees levied on the graduate students that are often tied to faculty, research, and grant dollars key to the success of the University.**

At the end of the forum Dr. Singer opened the floor for "Hot Topic" issues:

- 1)Health Insurance/Plan and Medical Costs
- 2)Conference Up-Front Costs and lack of the possibility to get travel advances in some departments.

- 3) Student reimbursement (no direct deposit and no email notification mechanism)
- 4) Monthly billing of fees (parking, health, tech).

Dr. Singer encouraged emailing her to completely describe these issues so that work can be done to solve the issues.

If there are any other questions or items, please email [GSSPresident@case.edu](mailto:GSSPresident@case.edu) or [GSSVP@case.edu](mailto:GSSVP@case.edu).